

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION/THESIS/RESEARCH PAPER/CREATIVE PROJECT: “Sympathy Unites, Whom Fate Divides”: Scottish-Enlightenment Dialectics of Nationhood in *The Power of Sympathy*’s Republican Parable

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The purpose of this paper is to identify and assess literary methods for encouraging national cohesion in William Hill Brown’s 1789 early American novel, *The Power of Sympathy*, by comparing it with travel literature from mid-eighteenth century Scotland. Early national fiction in the United States offered a mode of unification to a young and balkanized nation, and, much like the letters of Enlightenment-era Scotland, provided a means to reshape and redefine its nation-state by challenging concepts of innate nature by promoting Lockean philosophies of acquired character. Both nations developed their self-concepts by redefining their cultural peripheries and fortifying the common virtues of the divided classes, ethnic groups, and sensibilities of their respective communities. By examining these themes in light of Claude Levi-Strauss’s anthropological epistemics and Adrian Hastings’ theories of national-formation, I intend to draw comparisons between Brown’s novel and the travel writings of Tobias Smollett and Sir Alexander Mackenzie, with reference to Adam Smith’s telling *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. By entering into these conversations, this paper strives to assess the literary dialectics of national construction common between these two nation-states.